



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 224090

DfES Number: 545002

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 04/11/2004
Inspector Name Dianne Andrews

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Ellesmere Ducklings
Setting Address Ellesmere Pre-school Unit
Ellesmere County Primary School, Elson Road
ELLESMERE
Shropshire
SY12 9EU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Mandy Musgrave

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Ellesmere Ducklings has been established since 1993 and operating in the present premises since 1997. The premises consists of a pre-fabricated classroom sited within the primary school grounds, in Ellesmere, North Shropshire. The group has sole use of the premises and the outdoor play area. The provision has charitable status and is managed by a voluntary committee. The group serves the local area.

There are currently 66 children on roll. This includes 21 funded 3-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports a number of children with special needs and have procedures in place to support those who speak English as an additional language.

The group offers a variety of sessions throughout the week, catering for different age groups. The usual session times are from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:45 to 15:15, offering a lunch club and the option to stay for full day care. There are nine staff members working with the children throughout the week. Four hold recognised childcare qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 and one staff member is working towards an award. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Ellesmere Ducklings Pre-School Group provides generally good nursery education for three-year-old children. Staff are developing a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children are making generally good progress, through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff provide many worthwhile learning experiences and opportunities for children to think, but more needs to be done to tailor activities to suit the needs of individual children. The system for planning should be developed, using the children's observations, to show the intended progression within activities for more able children. Activities are attractively presented and varied and staff make generally good use of space and resources. However, opportunities to develop children's independence through self-selection, choice and child-initiated activities are limited. Further development within the plans to show the intended learning within everyday routines and activities will ensure that children's learning is not affected by their varying attendance patterns.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, however the organisation of the staff teams lacks consistency and continuity for children and parents. Staff training is given priority and has helped to develop staff's knowledge of the early learning goals.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Detailed information is given on the operation of the pre-school through the prospectus, parents' noticeboard and daily messages displayed in the foyer. Parents are offered opportunities to review their children's progress through periodic meetings with their child's key worker, but are not encouraged to contribute to their initial profiles or the on-going assessment process. However, parents of children with special educational needs are actively involved and are supported effectively by staff.

What is being done well?

- Children are interested and eager to participate in activities and have a positive approach to learning. They are keen to try new experiences and are stimulated and excited by tactile activities, such as the exploration of split peas.
- Children behave well, encouraged by staff's high expectations of behaviour. Children are helped to respond to the boundaries of behaviour and to begin to understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others.
- Children have access to a range of resources and experience thematic topics, which introduce family customs and other cultures and beliefs.
- The programme for physical development is very good. Staff use facilities well to provide a range of opportunities for children to develop control and

coordination through the use of a variety of tools and equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- the consideration of the learning potential within the everyday routines and activity rotas, to take account of the varying attendance patterns of children
- the planning for activities, which extend the learning for more able children
- opportunities for children to initiate their learning and actively participate in the selection of resources and equipment
- the involvement of parents in the process of assessing their child's development
- the organisation of the staff teams to provide more consistency for children and parents
- the use of numerals within the environment to enable staff and children to use them as a learning tool
- opportunities for children to access written text within the environment and to recognise their own name.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable, as this is the first inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children confidently express their needs and ideas and relate well to each other and adults in the group. They become interested and involved in their play. Children behave appropriately and are aware of the rules within the setting. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and promote children's self-esteem through re-enforcement and praise. Opportunities to develop children's independence through child-initiated learning are limited.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are becoming confident and fluent speakers. They practise writing for a purpose within the writing area, but opportunities to develop this within other areas of the pre-school are missed. Reading skills are developing well, as staff regularly encourage children to access books, but examples of text within the environment are limited and children are not encouraged to recognise their name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff provide appropriate activities to encourage children to practice their skills with shapes, sizes and patterns. However, there are few opportunities for children to become familiar with written numerals within the environment and activities are not planned to meet the individual children's stages of learning. Children are becoming familiar with number rhymes and explore, in a practical way, the early concepts of addition and subtraction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show an interest in, and knowledge of, the world around them. They are developing an understanding of past and present events and are becoming aware of their own environment, local community and of other cultures and beliefs. They are provided with opportunities to work with a range of natural materials, but have limited spontaneous opportunities to explore and investigate.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy outdoor play and most participate confidently. They access and use a wide range of tools and large and small equipment on a daily basis, which helps them to develop control and co-ordination skills effectively. Adult-led activities build on children's developing skills, promoting confidence and independence. Children are developing a good awareness of how the body works and planned activities promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have some opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture, but do not have access to materials and resources to encourage creativity through their own imagination or self-expression. Children play imaginatively in the role play and construction areas, taking on and developing a variety of roles and ideas. They express and communicate their ideas confidently, responding to experiences within their lives.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Increase the level of challenge during activities for more able children.
- Encourage children to initiate activities and self-select resources.
- Continue to develop planning, considering the learning potential within everyday activities.
- Involve parents in the on-going assessment process for their children.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.